

CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, JANUARY 31, 2011

705 W. University Avenue, Council Auditorium

Commission members in attendance: Odon Bacque, Dale Bourgeois, Karen Carson, Bruce M Conque, George A. Lewis, Greg Manual, D. Keith Miller, Stephen J. Oats, Aaron Walker

Absent: None

Charter staff members in attendance: Tammy Pratt (Assistant City-Parish Attorney) and Veronica L. Williams (Charter Commission Clerk)

Council Members/Staff in attendance: Council Chair Jay Castille, Council Clerk Norma Dugas

Administration staff in attendance: Director of Lafayette Utilities System Terry Huval

(5:30 p.m.) AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: Call to order
Chair George Lewis called the meeting to order.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance
Commissioner Karen Carson was called upon to deliver the invocation and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: Comments/Announcements from Commission Members
Carson questioned the status on discussing a proposal to increase the number of Planning and Zoning Board members from five (5) members to seven (7) members. Lewis stated that he talked with Legal about the matter and was told that the issue should be considered by the Council. Lewis announced that Becky Lalumia, Chief Financial Officer, would be retiring with 34 years of experience from LCG and congratulated her on her accomplishments.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: Further discussion of Hefner model
Lewis stated that he had drafted possible language that could be used should the model be considered and provided a copy of the language, adding that the intent would be to have the Council Members represent the same number of citizens. The city could not vary on districts; however, the parish could have a number of districts higher or fewer than the city districts. Conque questioned what would happen should citizens be annexed into the City from the parish and whether the district lines would be shifted to accommodate the annexed property. Further, the question was asked on whether it would be legal to decrease the number of citizens in a parish district, while increasing another district. Legal stated that they would review the question and provide a response. Bacque thought the model could be a workable solution to a consolidated council.

Nancy Mounce stated that the plan seemed logical if the intent was to have both bodies meet simultaneously. There was no reason why the plan could not include a Mayor and parish manager. In Mounce's opinion, the more elected officials that were added to any government structure, the more likely the chance citizens would not support the plan. The Hefner plan still allowed for the City of Lafayette to have its autonomy. In closing, Mounce noted that she was not a fan of the liaison system, where Council Members met on issues prior to a Council Meeting. These meetings did not allow for transparency and accountability.

Joey Durel questioned whether the Commission was over-thinking the issues involved. Carson asked if he favored the plan and Durel responded that he favored a similar plan for many years now. Bacque expressed concern regarding separating the governments, given there could be a lack of coordination in the way parish monies would be allocated.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: Consideration of whether additional time is needed for the Commission to complete its work

Conque advised that, after further review of the Hefner Plan, he saw problems with implementation at this time and did not feel it could work. Oats clarified that he thought the request for more time was to allow the Council/School Board time to complete the redistricting process and requested that the Commission support the request to extend the time. Conque stated that he would support the request should a majority of the Commission members support an extension.

When asked the question on whether he would extend the time, Jay Castille responded that he would not support an extension, inasmuch as to-date the Commission had a majority of its work completed. Further, the Council would still have to follow the procedures set forth in the existing charter through 2016. Oats stated that should the Hefner Plan be implemented, it could allow the opportunity for four (4) parish council members to defer to the five (5) City Council members on city related issues. Bacque asked if it would be possible to place a charter amendment on the ballot for October and Conque responded that he thought it would be possible. Lewis reminded that the Commission had approximately 10 meeting remaining.

A motion was offered by Oats, seconded by Manuel **to request that the Lafayette City-Parish Council extend the term of the Charter Commission for an additional nine (9) month period** and the vote was as follows:

YEAS: Carson, Conque, Lewis, Manuel, Miller, Oats, Walker

NAYS: Bacque, Bourgeois

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

The motion was approved.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: Review of current charter for “tweaks”

Lewis proposed that, on the next agenda, the Commission discuss changes/tweaks to the existing charter, specifically with reference to the Lafayette Public Utilities Authority and Lafayette Utilities System.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: General comments from the public on Consolidation

Dale Brasseaux spoke against a term extension for the Commission and suggested that the Commission work within the timeline provided to complete its work. The people want to vote and move forward. Current discussions may be difficult for the people to understand; and he felt that an LUS Board should be elected.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8: Next meeting date

The next meeting was scheduled for February 7 to continue discussions on the existing charter.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9: Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:09 p.m.